

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 18, 2001 (BOS Mtg. 10/2/01)

TO: York County Board of Supervisors

FROM: James O. McReynolds, County Administrator

SUBJECT: York County Historical Museum

Background

As the Board is aware, the York County Historical Committee has been planning a Museum for several years. The Committee has saved and designated financial contributions for this purpose and has also amassed a considerable collection of exhibit materials that are stored in various members' homes. Space has been provided in York Hall for a display on the Yorktown Village. This also allows some storage and a small space for work on artifacts. The next stage in developing the Historical Committee's Museum concept is to add a second, more spacious and comprehensive facility. County staff has been deeply involved with the Historical Committee in pursuing this objective. During the past six months considerable progress has been made in laying the proper foundation for such a project. To summarize:

◆ **Organizational structure**

Operating a Museum requires an organizational structure capable of managing property and staffing resources – primarily through the use of volunteers but with the long-range prospects for paid personnel. In addition, the organization must be capable of receiving and accounting for gifts of display materials and items “loaned” for exhibit purposes. The current structure is the Historical Committee, appointed wholly by the Board of Supervisors and with no standing separate from the County. Using this structure would make the Museum a County government function, with the Board of Supervisors and County staff assuming ultimately the responsibility and accountability for operations. This would include the actual ownership of exhibit materials and full liability for handling and management of loaned items.

Recognizing that this approach may not be ideal, County staff worked with the Historical Committee to develop a proposed organizational structure that would allow a measure of independent functioning while still providing for reasonable County support and interaction. A chart depicting the proposed organizational structure is included. In short, the recommendation is for a private, non-profit corporation registered with the State Corporation Commission. The Board of Supervisors, Historical Committee, and Historical Society would each make appointments to a Board of Directors which would then secure two additional members from other government entities or the public at-large. When formed, this Board could also seek an IRS 501(c)(3) designation for Federal tax exempt status.

The Historical Committee has developed proposed bylaws and elected a provisional board in anticipation of pursuing this arrangement. The County Attorney has prepared the necessary Articles of Incorporation. Each item is enclosed for your review.

◆ **Facility**

In addition to an appropriate organizational structure, it is necessary to identify a suitable facility. Some time ago the County purchased property on Cook Road adjacent to York High School. It was originally thought that this would eventually be used in its entirety to expand the school site and to develop athletic facilities that could also be used by the public. That continues to be a need. However, the property also contains a residential structure that was constructed in the early part of the 20th century. Customarily referred to as the Mapp property, the house is of a “Craftsman” style and was a working farm for decades.

As the Board is aware, both farming and the structures of this style have all but disappeared from the County. Staff and the Historical Committee believe that preserving a structure representative of such a significant period of County history is justifiable and that the building and location would be very appropriate for use as a York County Museum. Further, it is believed that the site could still accommodate some recreational fields while retaining the house, outbuildings, kitchen garden, and some grounds for outside exhibits such as farm implements.

Some improvements to the property would be needed, primarily to improve heating and ventilating systems, create parking, and address access for those with disabilities. Preliminary assessments place cost-estimates at approximately \$30,000. The tourism-designated lodging tax revenues are a potential source of funding for these improvements.

The Historical Committee and staff believe that establishing a York County Museum at this site would complement the Historical Committee’s presence in York Hall. The Committee’s displays and exhibits in York Hall focusing on Yorktown would continue to be appropriate and desirable. The Mapp property would provide an opportunity for the Committee’s existing and potential exhibits relating more broadly to York County to be displayed. Both facilities could “promote” one another. In addition, the Yorktown Trolley could be routed to the Museum at the Mapp property via Surrender Road at least several times each day that it is in service, which would further increase exposure and attendance at the facility.

The County presently rents the house on a month-to-month basis. If the Board agrees to make the property available as a Museum, appropriate notice would need to be given to the tenant. Staff believes that the 30 days notice required under the terms of the lease would be inappropriate and suggests that a longer period would be more considerate and would not interfere with any of the planning and coordination work that would be necessary before on-site renovations could actually commence.

Recommendation

With the concurrence of the Historical Committee, I recommend the Board take the following actions:

1. Endorse the proposed organizational structure, Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for a York County Historical Museum.
2. Direct the County Attorney to submit the Articles of Incorporation to the State Corporation Commission.
3. Direct staff to negotiate a lease agreement between the County and the newly created Museum Board for the use of the Mapp House and certain portions of the grounds. The lease should reflect maintenance of the property by the County with all responsibility and liability for contents, exhibits, programming, staffing, etc., to belong to the Museum Board.
4. Approve \$30,000 from Tourism Funds or the Contingency Fund to be used for necessary repairs and upgrades on the building.
5. Provide notice to the tenant to be effective March 1, 2002.
6. Authorize staff to take any and all such additional actions as may be required to facilitate the establishment of a York County Historical Museum.

Smith/4111

Attachments:

- Organizational Structure
- Proposed Bylaws
- Proposed Articles of Incorporation
- Museum Site Graphic
- Resolution R01-179